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SHEM TOB BEN JOSEPH PALQUERA
A THINKER AND POET OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY
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I

THE great German historian Ranke observes somewhere that the thirteenth century was the darkest in all human history. In proof thereof he points to the general antagonism among nations in their foreign policies, and to the low standard of their domestic institutions and ideals, social and political. It was the age inaugurated by the reign of Pope Innocent III, the Pope who, in Graetz's opinion, was responsible for all the ills from which European nations suffered up to the time of the Lutheran Reformation: the tyranny of the Roman church over princes and peoples; the enslavement and the degradation of the intellect; the persecution of the devotees of free research; the establishment of the Inquisition; the heaping up of the funeral pyres for heretics who dared question the infallibility of the Roman church.

A survey of this ominous century from the point of view of Jewish experience, serves only to corroborate Ranke's startling indictment. One sure test of the progress of a people and the stage of civilization they have attained is the treatment they accord to their dissenting minorities. The Jew in the Diaspora, always in the minority, thus serves as a measure of the culture of the nations among whom he

has dwelt.¹ That this era of "papal enlightenment" should mark the advent of the dark ages for the Jew is therefore sadly significant. This all-powerful ecclesiastical monarch, who enslaved Europe with a host of monks and spies, was also the bitterest enemy of the Jews and of Judaism, inflicting on them greater injury than all his predecessors. Inventor of the Inquisition and of the stake, deviser of tortures, author of the cruelest exceptional laws against the Jews, the founder of the Dominicans and Franciscans, orders that brought untold woe upon Israel—this is his baleful meaning for mediæval Jewry (Graetz, *Geschichte*, VII, 32).

I do not know whether Ranke had in mind conditions among the Jews when he pronounced his sweeping condemnation or not. At any rate, the intellectual activity of the Jews in the thirteenth century refutes for once at least the old proverb "*Wie es sich christelt, so jüdet es sich*". A foremost Jewish scholar, one who has never been charged with apologetic tendencies in behalf of Judaism, gives the following characterization of the age: "If we consider the Jewish literature in its entirety, we shall find here, as elsewhere, that the thirteenth century was a critical period of the utmost interest, both on account of its original achievements and of the developments to which it led. The storm and stress, the conflict of ideas in the thirteenth century, is no less significant than that of the nineteenth century."²

The thirteenth century was not, indeed, an age of originality. It cannot boast of thinkers and poets of the creative power of Solomon Ibn Gabirol or Judah Halevi. Jewish philosophy had attained its culmination earlier in

¹ Berthold Auerbach, *Lebensgeschichte Spinoza's*, Stuttgart 1871, p. xvii.

² Steinschneider, *JQR.*, XVII, 354.

Maimonides. On the other hand, however, in this age, intellectual activity and literary production in religious and secular fields extended over a wider and more varied range than ever before.

These features of the age are reflected in the history of Jewish literature. The learning of Gaonic times and the period following is associated with only few prominent names. The masses, as it appears from the literature of that time, were but little affected by the intellectual aspirations of the great scholars. In the thirteenth century, however, the number of scholars increased remarkably, above all in the field of Talmudic research. The interest of the masses becomes widespread. How else can we explain the universal interest in the great controversy over the writings of Maimonides and the study of philosophy, a controversy which assumed such wide proportions, and entered so deeply into the life of thirteenth century Jewry?

As center for this widespread learning of the age, Provence stood second only to Spain. Its geographical situation made it the meeting point for the scientific culture developed under Arabic influence in Spain and the Talmudic learning of the French Jews. In Provence the last of the compilers of the Haggadah lived. There, since the time of Ibn Tibbon, numerous translators were busied with Arabic works, and there in the thirteenth century secular learning continued to be cultivated with zeal and enthusiasm. There also appeared many famous scholars, who united a comprehensive knowledge of the Talmud with broad general learning, and who exerted a lasting influence upon later ages. As the most famous we need mention only Moses Nahmanides, Solomon ben Adret, and Menahem Meiri.

An age in which intellectual interest is keen, is usually characterized on the one hand by an abundance of works on a great variety of themes, and on the other hand by much mediocrity on the part of their authors. Moreover, there are always more men of talent than of genius; and with education popularized, the half-educated are allured to authorship. The result is literary over-production. The literary history of the thirteenth century with its vast output of books and the comparative paucity of great authors is another illustration of the rule.

The general situation in the thirteenth century is dwelt upon at some length, because the subject of this essay is one of those men who are clearly the products of the environment and the reflection of their time, and not one of the few who are pioneers and heralds of a later age. Shem Tob ben Joseph Palquera is not eminent as the creator of a new movement or the embodiment of a new tendency. His work and thought, however, reflect better than that of any of his contemporaries, the scientific aspirations of the Jews of his time, and his life may serve, therefore, to give us a deeper insight into the stirring intellectual and spiritual life of the thirteenth century.

Considering the productivity of Shem Tob Palquera as philosopher and poet, it is surprising how little is known of his private life. His birthplace was in all probability one of the provinces on the Franco-Iberian boundary. Of his childhood, his education, his family, little is known with certainty. Not even the year of his birth is specifically recorded anywhere. In a work written in 1264, he speaks of himself as nearing his fortieth year, and on this basis, 1225 is assumed as the year of his birth. So meager are the data concerning Palquera, that the origin and even the cor-

rect spelling and pronunciation of his family name are uncertain.³

Of the circumstances of his later life, we know but little more. We cannot say definitely how he supported himself. It appears that he remained unmarried. The year of his death is even less certain than that of his birth. We hear of him for the last time in 1290, as a participant in the debate between the Maimonists and anti-Maimonists. His life thus coincided with the greater part of the thirteenth century.

In the absence of more definite information on the life and death of Palquera, biography is out of the question, unless we are ready to accept the figments of our imagination as fact. Under the circumstances, we can do no more than examine with care the works of Palquera which time has spared, and infer from the letter to the spirit, educe from their order and contents, something of the motives and ideals which inspired the author's career.

Palquera was by nature a modest, retiring man, a dreamer, leading the contemplative life, and looking out

³ The name occurs in Hebrew in various forms, e. g. פלאקיר, פלכרה, פלאקירא, בלקירה, etc. The transliteration into modern languages by recent authors varies accordingly: Falaquera, *JE.*, s. v.; Palaquera, Phalchera, Palquira, etc. We adopt with Steinschneider (*Al-Farabi*, 176) the pronunciation Palquera = פלאקירא which occurs most frequently. The derivation of the name, which was shared by two other scholars, namely Joel and his son Nathan (comp. Steinschneider, *Hebr. Übers.*, 842) from Beaucaire in France, is doubted by Steinschneider (*Hebr. Bibl.*, XX, 17; comp. *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, 1894, p. 1637-8), as it seems to me, without ground, considering the fact that Moses of Salon is referred to in manuscripts as Moses דבילקירי, דבילקיריא, דבילקירא, which place Steinschneider himself identified with Beaucaire (*Hebr. Übers.*, § 87); see also *Hist. litt. de la France*, XXXI, 412 ff.; see also Venetianer's Introduction to his edition of Palquera's ספר המעלות = "Book of the Degrees (of Men)", Berlin 1894, p. vii, n. 2.

upon the world through the spectacles of the philosopher and the poet. His was not the world of stern reality and cold fact, but the world evolved from the riches of a creative imagination, and the deep feelings of a sensitive soul. What room was there for a man of his refined temperament in a world ruled over by St. Louis and his dull and dismal confrères—for him, the Jew, despised, branded with the yellow badge of degradation, harassed and persecuted? One of his poems reflects feelingly the circumstances amid which he and his fellow Jews lived:

Can the lorn Jew be joyous, when
Accursed is his lot among men?
For, tho' to-day his wealth be more
Than sand upon the ocean's shore,
To-morrow goes he stripped and sore.
What justice can there be for Jew,
His foe being judge and jury, too?
Or how should Israel raise his head.
Wallowing in blood and sore-bestead?
O God, redeem Thy people's state,
And glorify and vindicate
Thy name, which foes now desecrate!"

הישמח היהודי האומלל
וחלקו בין בני אדם מקולל
ואם היום יהי עשרו כחול ים
למחר יהלוך ערום ושולל
ומה יצדק ילוד יעקב ויזכה
בעוד אויבו ידיגו ופול
ואיך ירים לראשו ישראל
והנה הוא כדם מכות מגולל..
אלהים עמך הושע אשר אז
תקדש את שמך המוחלל !

From the discomforts and sorrows of life in an untoward world, his spirit sought solace in the less tangible but more happy and exalted realm of biblical and talmudic study, and Greek and Arabic speculation—"the realm wherein the wise and the learned are crowned, and dwell ever delighting in the presence and glory of God."⁵

From this retreat not even the ambition to attain to the much-coveted scholar's fame, lured Palquera. For him knowledge and learning were not currency with which to purchase earthly goods, but ends in themselves. What is fame, he asks; what are the good things of this world compared with the soul's satisfaction that comes from the search after truth?⁶

Animated by these beliefs, Palquera turned his back upon the world and devoted himself more and more to a life of contemplation and study. From the few vague allusions to his personal history, it appears, as already noted, that he never married,⁷ and never filled any public position. He does not seem to have taken up any fixed abode, but wandered like most of his coreligionists of the time, driven from place to place, leading a precarious existence.⁸ He

(מבקש, ed. Hague, 1779, p. 6b). The metrical version of this and other poems which I shall have occasion to cite, I owe to the kindness of Rabbi Harry W. Ettelson.

⁵ See his commentary on Maimonides' Guide, מורה המורה, 142.

⁶ ראשית חכמה published by M. David, Berlin 1902, 7f.; comp. Steinschneider, *Al-Farabi*, 177.

⁷ Comp. המעלות, 60; Steinschneider, *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, I. c.

⁸ וכל גבר יראה עני בשבט עברת זמנו

ונע ונר בארץ לבקש מזונו,

והתלאה סובבת מכל עבר

ומכל צד יבוא השוד והשבר

עד [כי] מתוך לאיש רגבי נחל ולשקוד על גדיש וקבר.

seems to have known the bitterness of poverty, for he returns to that theme more than once in his poems.

Poverty and Death,—these both,
Ah, are ills intensified!
But, if 'twixt them you must choose,
Death, the preferable, decide!⁹

He, too, found that riches and devotion to learning are not often mated. With a trace of bitterness alien to his nature, he laments:

Behold how Fate impov'risheth the wise,
But gives the witless fortune's every prize!
Sooner with water fire may combine,
Than that both wealth and wisdom should be thine.¹⁰

The homage paid to the vulgar rich inspired his muse to a striking bit of satire:

Who to a "No-account" his deference shows
Because of stylish looks and costly clothes,

(מבקש, 3a). Palquera speaks there not only of himself, but of men's fate in general.

9

שפלות חיים וכאב מות

בשניהם משנה שברון

אם אי אפשר לאיש מזה

או זה — יש במות יתרון .

(*ib.*, 9b, and "Book of the Degrees," 51). Comp. משלי חכמים, in צוואת ר' הקבר ולא: יהודה אבן תבון, ed. Steinschneider, Berlin 1852, p. 21, No. 54: העוני.

10

זמן יוריש מתי חכמה ויעשיר

כסילים וחסר[ין] לב יאשר

ומים תאסוף עם אש בידך

בטרם תאסוף חכמה ועשר.

(*ib.*, 8a).

Is like to one, who would a corpse admire
For being buried in rich silk-attire.¹¹

His scanty wants he satisfied in various ways. Some income, it seems, he derived from his patrimony. He may also have practiced medicine.¹² For the physicians of his day he does not appear to have great esteem; witness the bantering tone of this poem:

Quoth Fate unto the Fool: "A doctor be,
Who, killing folks off, netteth income large;
So hast thou vantage o'er Death's Angel;—He
Must take the lives of people free of charge!"¹³

He was also a writer of occasional poems, and probably in the fashion of the time, received gifts from wealthy patrons. This occupation, however, he early abjured as

¹¹ נפש תוקיר כסיל לפי
פניו או הוד וסוה דומה
למכבד מת יען קברו
אותו בתכריכי רקמה .

(*ib.*, 10a).

¹² Both are conjectures of Steinschneider, *Literaturzeitung*, l. c., based on passages in *המעלות*, 50, 63. The first suggestion, however, is not sufficiently borne out by the text referred to; see end of next note.

¹³ אמר זמן לכסיל היה רופא
תמית בני אדם וקח ממונם
לך יתרון על מלאכי מות
כי הם ימיתון האנוש בחנם .

(*ib.*, 15 b, translated metrically into German by Steinschneider, *Manna*, 83). Palquera is, however, not the author of this epigram, and, therefore, introduces it with the words *המושורר*, by which he probably refers to its author, Joseph Ibn Zebara (about 1200), in whose *ספר שעשועים* (published in *לבונו*, Paris 1866), p. 26, it first occurs; comp. Steinschneider, *ZfB.*, VIII, 187, No. 5. Aside from this, it is not always safe to conclude from such epigrams as to the real opinion of the author. In *המעלות*, 63, Palquera recommends the practice of medicine as the "noblest of all human occupations", from which passage Steinschneider inferred that he was a physician; see the preceding note.

little suited to his taste and temperament.¹⁴ Eking out thus an uncertain livelihood, he nevertheless did not complain of his lot, forgetting hardship in his devotion to learning.

We should be in error, if we inferred from Palquera's indifference to wealth and power and his absorption in study and contemplation that he was one of the dreary ascetics, so numerous at that time in the church, with whom mortification of the flesh was a merit. From such phantastic doctrines he was saved by the teachings of Judaism, to which asceticism has on the whole been repugnant, and by the Aristotelian ethics, which warned its disciples to avoid all extremes. The Aristotelian ethics of the golden mean found in Palquera a disciple scarcely less devoted than his master Maimonides; and he continued to teach it with all the emphasis with which it had been expounded by the greatest of the Jewish philosophers.¹⁵ Palquera's views were

¹⁴ Comp. below, note 50.

¹⁵ Of the numerous passages in which he gives expression to this Aristotelian doctrine the following one may be quoted: כל איש אשר לבו נדבו ללכת באורח מישור.... יעמיד בדרך האמצעי פעליו וירחיק מהקצות מעלליו.... ולא יצא מן התוך אל הקצה וחי' אמרו (חולין נ"ח:) כל יתר כנטול דמי וארסמו אומר התוספת על הגבול חסרון מהמוגבל ואמר הדברים הטובים הם הממוצעים (ראשית חכמה; comp. *ib.*, 76 *et passim*; מבקש 2a, 3a, 17a, 18b; ראשית חכמה, 10). This theory has become a creed with the Jewish as well as with some Arabic philosophers. Gazzali, one of the most orthodox representatives of Islam, even goes so far as to interpret the words **اهدنا الصراط المستقيم** (= "lead us in the straight path") of the first sura of the Koran, which constitutes the Lord's Prayer of the Mohammedans, as referring to the middle way advocated by the Stagirite (מאוני צדק, 96; comp. Steinschneider, *Hebr. Übers.*, 344, n. 604). It is worth noticing that Palquera introduces the passage quoted above by the interpretation of a talmudic passage (Moed Katan 5a) which he took from Maimonides' "Eight Chapters", iv, end. The same was done by Abraham Ibn Hisdai, the Hebrew translator of Gazzali, *l. c.*, who has replaced all the quotations of the Arabic original from Mohammedan sources by quotations of similar content from Bible and Talmud;

thus far removed from those of the cloistered monk, to whom the body was the work of the devil, and the pleasures of the senses, sinful. His attitude toward sensual enjoyments was that of the philosopher, who calmly weighs the delights of earth, and arrives at the conviction that while earthly happiness is indeed worth striving after, it cannot be an end in itself, but only means for the refinement of

comp. his own words about it in his Introduction to the work, p. 4. Among Jewish philosophers Saadia was the first to make this doctrine the basis of his Ethics (*Al-Amānāt*, chapter X; comp. Dukes, *Salomom b. Gabirol*, 29). It was then accepted by Ibn Gabirol (Dukes, *l. c.*, 10, 99, 116; Rosin, *Die Ethik des Maimonides*, 12ff.), and even by Bahya Ibn Pakuda, *Duties*, iii. 3; ix. 1, 3, 7; comp. Rosin, 14, although on the whole (see particularly *Duties*, iv. 4, end) he shows a decided tendency toward asceticism. According to Judah Halevi, *Kusari*, ii. 50, the doctrine of the golden mean is the underlying idea of many precepts of the Torah. Abraham Ibn Daud, too, pleads for the middle way in all human actions (*Emunah Ramah*, 98; comp. Rosin, 24), but it was Maimonides, the great systematizer, who in his "Eight Chapters", iv, has treated the subject in its various aspects, making the strict observance of the middle course the central point of Jewish ethics; comp. Rosin 25. As every true idea must be indicated in the Bible and the Talmud we find Maimonides (*l. c.*; comp. also *Hil. Deot*, i. 3-6; *Guide*, II, 39; III, 54) and his faithful followers, as our Palquera and Joseph Kaspi (comp. Steinschneider, in *Ersch und Gruber's Enc.*, sec. II, vol. 31, p. 64, n. 37) endeavoring to interpret scriptural verses and rabbinical dicta in the light of this theory; comp. also Schreiner, *REJ.*, XXII, 69, n. 4. An interesting parallel is found in Tosefta Hagigah 2: מעלין לאדם להלך באמצע ולא יהא נוטה לכאן ולכאן; comp. p. Hagigah, ii. 1, near the beginning, and Rosin, 26, n. 1. Among the Arabs, too, the doctrine of the *media via* was known already before the works of Aristotle had reached them; comp. Goldziher, *Kitāb ma'ānī al-naḥs*, Berlin 1907, p. 20; *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, XVIII, 197. In Honein's Apophthegms (הפילוסופים), ed. Læwenthal, 1896), i. 15, one of the thirteen Greek sages who assembled to discuss philosophic topics says: מה טוב קו היושר בהם בכל הענינים ומה מאוד רע המותרות בהם; comp. *ib.*, ii. 15, No. 23: מן פניני המליצות, and Gurland, *ההצלחה שלא יעבור אדם מקו היושר*, No. 179.

The above quotation from Palquera's המעלות, referring to Hullin 58b, where an animal born with five legs is declared טרפה on the ground of כל יתר כנטול דמי, will give the reader a hint as to the nature of some of these interpretations. See, however, the references given below, note 17.

the feelings and uplifting of the soul; that while the body is not to be despised, it cannot be allowed to rule, but must be kept ever subservient to the mind.¹⁶

This philosophy, set down also in Browning's Rabbi Ben Ezra, was by no means novel even in Palquera's day.

In Talmud and Midrash there are many hints of it.¹⁷ Maimonides had given a long philosophical exposition of the Aristotelian golden mean, and Palquera followed the master here, as elsewhere in the paths of philosophy.¹⁸ There is, however, in Palquera, in spite of his philosophy, an undeniable leaning towards asceticism, and in this respect, he follows more closely the author of the "Duties of the Heart", although he nowhere quotes or mentions Bahya.¹⁹

Indeed, Palquera did not strive to be original either in ethics or metaphysics. The commanding genius of Maimonides deterred from originality. He had settled all problems. Palquera did not aspire to lead forth on new paths, but was content to follow classic models. He was neither discoverer nor pioneer. He set himself to the humble task of inspiring love for learning and zeal for study, for in his view the joy

¹⁶ ואינו מן הנכון להעביר הרוחני הנכבד מפני הגופני השפל... וכל מי שנותן יתרון לחלק הגופני על החלק הרוחני אי אפשר שישג התכלית הקצוי (המעלות 'ס', 51). The "final goal" to which he refers in the last two words is the intellectual perfection, the fourth and highest degree of human perfections described by Maimonides, *Guide*, III, 54. The expression התכלית [הקצוי] for the usual השלמות האחרונה is one of the many coinages of new philosophic terms peculiar to Palquera; comp. Zunz, *Ges. Schr.*, III, 277.

¹⁷ Comp. Cassel, on Kusari, II, 50 (2d ed., p. 151); Rosin, *l. c.*, 13, 26; Dukes, *Zur rabbinischen Spruchkunde*, 50.

¹⁸ It should be noted, however, that in spite of his veneration for Maimonides he quite often declares his independence strictly opposing the views of his master; comp. מורה המורה, 99, Steinschneider, *Al Farabi*, 134, and the passages referred to by Venetianer, XI, notes 1 and 2.

¹⁹ Comp. Venetianer, IX, note 5.

of knowledge was the acme of human happiness.²⁰ With whole-hearted simplicity and frankness, he tells us again and again that he is not setting forth original doctrines of his own, but that he is merely bringing together the teachings of the greatest philosophers and scholars,²¹ for the purpose of stirring up the laggard and indifferent, and guiding aright the industrious and the zealous.²² His constant admonitions to study and speculation suggest at times the reproofs and exhortations of the preacher. A life of devotion to the teachings for which he sought to awaken enthusiasm in others is, however, evidence of a harmony of practice and preaching which has unfortunately become rare at times.

All of Palquera's aspirations are summed up in devotion to one idea,—to live a holy life, to purify the will and to perfect character, to surrender one's self to study and contemplation, in order to arrive through this discipline at the ultimate truths of metaphysics, and to attain thereby to that stage of human perfection, in which, according to me-

²⁰ מורה המורה, 9; comp. Steinschneider, *Al-Farabi*, 177, and ראשית חכמה 132.

²¹ ורוב דברי בו בחכמות הם דברי ראשי הפילוסופים 9: , ראשית חכמה בקיאייהם כי לא חדשתים אני מעצמי אלא שקבצתים מהספרים שהם מפוזרים שם. Similarly he expresses himself in his *צירי היגון*, ed. Fürth 1854, p. 11; מובקש, 3a; המעלות, 11; דעות הפילוסופים (unpublished), quoted by Steinschneider, *Cat. Leyden*, 65. Even in this confession his great teacher, Maimonides, seems to have served him as a model, with whose words in the Introduction to the "Eight Chapters" the above passage shows striking resemblance: ודע שהדברים אשר אומר בפרקים אלו . . . אינם דברים בדותים מעצמי ולא פרושים שהחדשים אמנם הם ענינים לקשתיים מדברי חכמים במדרשות ותלמוד . . . ומדברי הפילוסופים ג'כ הקדמונים והחדשים . . . ושמע האמת ממי שאמרו. About the last sentence see below, note 31.

²² כדי להעיר הנפש משנת העצלה ולהזהירה תמיד על ההתמדה בלמוד ולדרוך (מעלות, 11). אחר המעלה העליונה שהיא מעלת החכמה

diæval belief, the human spirit became part of the divine spirit, and the finite was merged in the Infinite. This mystical mediæval doctrine was of great significance. Metaphysics, under the influence of this idea was more than the mere search for truth; it was the means of ecstatic union with the Godhead. Ethics thus became secondary to metaphysics. Religious observances, for Palquera as for Maimonides, ceased to have an absolute value in and for themselves: they formed a discipline for the soul, calculated to restrain the animal instincts and passions, in order that the pure spirit or intellect in man might not be hampered in its striving after self-realization and union with God. We can now understand more readily Palquera's passion for study and speculation, and his zeal to spread knowledge and to stimulate intellectual activity.

A comprehension of the highest metaphysical truth was absolutely essential to a deeper and purer faith,—we might well nigh say, to salvation. Naturally Palquera was confronted with the problem out of which had sprung the entire philosophical movement among the Jews in the Middle Ages—namely, the reconciliation of Judaism with Greek philosophy, a segment of the larger problem, the relation of revealed religion to science and rational thought. This question was by no means a mere academic debate in Palquera's day. A party of zealots²⁸ frowned upon the study of Greek philosophy as incompatible with piety and destructive of faith. Palquera was convinced that the mediæval philosophy, current among Jews, Christians, and Moham-

²⁸ In his Introduction to *מורה המורה*, beginning, Palquera refers to them as *רבים מחכמי תורתנו*; see his Epistle in the defense of Maimonides, printed at the end of *מנחת קנאות* of Abba Mari, Pressburg 1838 (also in *קובץ תשובות הרמב"ם*, 1859, III, 23ff.), and the following notes.

medans, was in no way in conflict with the doctrines of Judaism; that the religion divinely revealed to Israel could not contain anything contrary to the conclusions of clear thinking. This proposition had been laid down by one of the Geonim²⁴ as early as the tenth century, and Maimonides had set himself to the task of giving it philosophical demonstration.

The assumption of the identity of the dicta of revelation with the doctrines of philosophy had important consequences. Palquera held it to be an unavoidable religious obligation to interpret Biblical texts in a way that would reconcile the conflicts between the Bible and the philosophers, that is, between reason and religion. This was what the older Jewish philosophers, and notably Maimonides, had done. The procedure naturally involved rationalism, and some of the disciples of Maimonides carried their rationalism to the utmost. They made of the Bible a textbook of science and metaphysics, written in a symbolic style. They held, for example, that Abraham and Sarah, of the biblical story, were to be understood as emblematic of matter and spirit. They declared that the twelve sons of Jacob stand for the twelve signs of the zodiac, and the Urim and the Thummim on the breast-plate of the high-priest were an astrolabe.²⁵ It was this extreme rationalistic procedure that had aroused the ire of conservatives and led them to denounce the study of philosophy.

²⁴ Namely the Gaon Samuël ben Hofni, father-in-law of Hai Gaon; comp. Steinschneider, *JQR.*, XVII., 357. Judah Halevi, *Kusari*, I, 67, expresses the same opinion: חלילה לאל שתבא התורה במה שירדה ראייה או מופת, "far be Steinschneider *JQR.*, XVII., 357. Judah Halevi, *Kusari*, I, 67, expresses ception, or syllogistic evidence"; comp. Bacher, *Die Bibelexegese der jüd. Religionsphilosophen*, 108, n. 2.

²⁵ For more particulars see Kaufmann's article in *Zunz' Jubelschrift*, 143 f., and *Die Sinne*, Leipzig 1884, 19f.

While Palquera himself did not go to extremes in his rationalism, he shows some traces of the same tendency. In this conflict he came forward energetically to defend the cause of the philosophers.²⁶ He attributes the hostility toward philosophy to ignorance, and holds that the ban on metaphysics could come only from the ignorant.²⁷ Already in his dialogue²⁸ between a pietist and a philosopher, on the permissibility of philosophic study, which was written in his earlier years, he is at pains to defend the study of philosophy and in the end brings the pietist over to the side of the philosopher and metaphysician, convincing him that the study of philosophy was not only permissible but essential to true religion.

To explain the presumed harmony existing between the teachings revealed in the Bible and the doctrines taught by pagan philosophy, an ingenious theory had been developed. In substance it was as follows: The wisdom of the Greeks and of other nations had their source among the Jews. The original works were lost in the Exile, but through transla-

²⁶ See his Epistle referred to above, n. 23.

²⁷ מזה הספר יתבאר באור אמתי אם אנו רשאים ללמוד אלו החכמות מצד תורתנו אם לא או אם סותרים דבר ממה שנזכר בתורתנו כמו שיחשוב מי שאין לו שכל מפני שיש אנשים חסרי דעת תועים בנפשם וחושבים כי הוא אסור מצד התורה לעיין באלו החכמות וזה הטעות הראה (ס', המעלות 73, line 21) קרה (read as in) להם מפני שהם סכלים באלו החכמות ואלו ידעו אמתתם היו יודעים כי הדבר הפך ממה ולא כאשר יחשבו חסרי לב כי הפילוסופיה שהיא: 48, המעלות, שחשבו החכמה המופתית סותרת תורתנו הלילה שתהיה סותרת האמת אבל המודיעה אותה ... הטפש חשב כי: 73, המעלות (see above note 24); comp. also המעלות 48: המעלות במחשבותיהם הרקות מהאמת כי כל דבר שהוא נזכר בפילוסופיא הוא שוא ושקר אפילו שיש על אותו דבר דעות הפילוסופים: מורה המורה, beginning; Comp. also *Cat. Leyden*, 63.

²⁸ *אגרת הוכוח*, 3d edition by Jellinek, Vienna 1875; comp. Brüll, *Jahrbücher*, II, 204; Steinschneider, *Hebr. Bibl.*, XV, 41; XVI, 91.

tions, the ideas contained in them were transmitted first to the Chaldeans and Persians, and subsequently to the Greeks and Romans. In its essential points, this notion is current among the Jews of Alexandria as early as the second century B. C. (being found in Aristobule of Paneas, an author quoted by Josephus and Eusebius). Pythagoras, it was supposed, had studied under King Solomon; or, according to others, he was the disciple of the prophet Ezekiel. Socrates derived his philosophy from Ahithophel and from Asaph the Psalmist; Plato was the pupil of Jeremiah, and Aristotle studied under Simon the Just. This view, so flattering to the pride of the Jews, was entertained also by the Arabs and the Christians.²⁹

Naturally, the Jews were particularly interested in the general acceptance of this view. The theory afforded the least humiliating apology for the absence of scientific works in Hebrew. It gave the Jews, devoted to scientific pursuits, the proud consciousness that even though they were studying science in a foreign language, they were still cultivating their own vineyard. To Palquera, thirsting for knowledge,

²⁹ There is a considerable literature on this point, a detailed discussion of which is, however, not within the scope of this essay. I refer the reader to Steinschneider's *Jewish Literature*, 275, n. 25, where, however, the statement about Roger Bacon's opposition to this view (repeated also in the article "Joseph Caspi", *Ersch und Gruber's Enc.*, sect. 2, vol. 31, p. 72, n. 74) is erroneous (see the passages from Bacon's works, quoted by Guttman, *Monatsschrift*, 1896, p. 324); comp. also Steinschneider, *Pseud-epigraphische Literatur*, 47, 80; *Hebr. Übers.*, p. xvi; Munk, *Guide*, I, 332, n. 3; Venetianer, *l. c.*, xii; Zimmels, *Leo Hebraeus*, 58; particularly Kaufmann, *Die Sinne*, 5ff., and *Studien über Salomon Ibn Gabirol*, 14. To the numerous sources mentioned there may be added the anonymus author of the *Kitāb ma'ānī al-nafs*, edited by Goldziher, Berlin 1907, p. 43; Hebrew translation, תורות הנפש, by Broyde, Paris 1896, p. 57 (comp. Guttman, *Monatsschrift*, 1897, p. 241ff.) and David Nieto, משה רב, fourth וכוז, No. 6f. Some information will be found also in my article ארסטוטליס in the Hebrew Enc. ישראל, 216, with which comp. Jellinek on הוכוח, 19, notes 3-5.

and eager to accept it, whether it appeared in a Jewish or in a non-Jewish garb, this doctrine was naturally no less welcome than to Judah Halevi (*Kusari*, II, 66) and Maimonides (*Guide*, I, 71). The Bible describes Solomon as the "wisest of men" and tells how all the nations of the earth flocked to hear his wisdom. It reports that he discoursed on the cedars of the Lebanon, the beasts of the field, and the fishes of the sea. By the play of mediæval fancy, King Solomon was made professor of natural science, theology, and metaphysics, whose works, subsequently lost to the Jews in exilic times, were translated by his foreign students into their own languages.³⁰ Hence, Palquera argued, it is a sacred duty to restore the treasures of science, of which Judaism had been despoiled, by the zealous study of the foreign literature, and the propagation thereof on its original soil. He took this task upon himself with enthusiasm; he denounced those who opposed the study of the wisdom of the Gentiles, as ignorant and blind. Losing his philosophical calm, he exclaims, "These fools know not that truth is to be accepted from every man. Its touch-stone is not the rank or position of its professor, but its intrinsic worth".³¹

³⁰ המעלות, 12; מורה המורה, 7; comp. S. Sachs, התחיה, 14; Steinschneider, *Hebr. Übers.*, 743.

³¹ ורבים מעמי הארץ אשר מחכמה רקים ודלים יקשה מאוד בעיניהם כשיביא המחבר ראיה מדברי חכמי האומות ודבריהם בעיניהם דברים בטלים ואומרים כי אין ראוי לקבלם ולא יזכרו ולא יפקדו ולא יעלו על לב לעולם. ולא יבינו אלה הפתאים חסרי הלב כי ראוי לקבל האמת מכל אדם אפילו שיהיה פחות ממנו או מעט אחר ואם יכתוב דבר ממה שאמר בשמו יכתבנו. ואין ראוי להביט אל האומר אלא על (sic) המאמר ("Book of the Degrees", II, quoted also by Jellinek, *l. c.*, 19). Very characteristic in this connection is Palquera's remark in *אגרת הוכוח*, 3, where he makes the philosopher say to the pietist: האדם חייב ללמוד עד מקום שירד מנגעת מהאומרים האמת אף שהם כופרים כמו שיוקח הרבש מן הדבורים; and another in the "B. of the D.", 75:

He acted accordingly, and explored the realm of Græco-Arabic philosophy. His incursion into this field was well rewarded: his pages bristle with citations of Plato, Aristotle, and the lesser lights of mediæval philosophy which with scrupulous conscientiousness, rare in mediæval writers, he credits to the authors.³² In the "Book of Degrees" alone, more than a hundred citations of Greek and Arabic thinkers appear. His success in popularizing Greek and Arabic thought among the Jews merits for him a high place in the temple of mediæval Jewish learning.³³

ולא הבינו אלו החסידים כי החכמות כר האומות משתתפות בהם ואינם מיוחדות לאומה ידועה, both of which show that the gospel of liberality and broad-mindedness was not first discovered by the "prophets" of the twentieth century. Comp. also the quotation from his unpublished דעות הפילוסופים in Steinschneider's *Catal. Leyden*, 63, Zunz, *Hebr. Bibl.*, IX, 136, and אגרת הוכוח, 13. The meaning of the sentence בעליה האמת והדע "Learn the truth and then consider him from whom it proceeds" becomes clear from the context, being quoted as a corroboration of the doctrine that truth is not to be judged by its propounders but by its intrinsic value. The expression והדע, however, does not clearly convey this idea. The sentence is attributed by Gazzali to the Caliph 'Ali, comp. Schmoelders, *Essai sur les écoles philosophiques ches les Arabes*, Paris 1842, p. 39. In Gazzali's *Ethics*, מואזני צדק, 166, the same sentence is quoted anonymously in a somewhat amplified form: אמר חכם לא יודע האמת באנשים דע האמת והדע אנשיו. Comp. Steinschneider, *Hebr. Bibl.*, XV, 44. The same idea is expressed by Maimonides, Introduction to the "Eight Chapters": ושמע האמת ממי שאמרו (see above, end of note 21); comp. משלי חכמים, in צוואת ר' יהודה אבן תבון, ed. Steinschneider, Berlin 1852, p. 21, No. 69. Joseph Kaspi in his Testament (in טעם זקנים, Frankf. a. M. 1854, p. 53) has the same sentence in mind when he admonishes his son: אל תביטו אל אומר הדברים, and then by a clever witticism refers it to himself taking the verse קחו מוסרי ואל כסף (Prov. 8, 10) as an allusion to his name, that is to say: heed my moral instruction and do not mind its coming from Kaspi.

... כתבתי כל דבר בשם אומרו ומי שהוא מפורסם אצל הכל זכרתי שמו ומי ... שאינו מפורסם אמרתי בערו והפילוסוף אומר ... Maimonides, Introduction to "Eight Chapters".

³² Comp. Güdemann, *Das jüd. Unterrichtswesen*, Vienna 1873, 155 f.

What a contrast between the liberal spirit of Palquera and the narrow attitude of the church of his time! While he was advocating the study of the literature of the Gentiles, the church vigorously forbade all intercourse with the Jews, lest its adherents might learn from the Jews aught that would undermine their faith; and an ecclesiastical council at Beziers, in 1246, forbade Christians to call in Jewish physicians.

Palquera's extraordinary command of the works of Arabic authors, his extensive and thorough knowledge of every branch of Jewish learning, sacred and profane, warrant his reputation as the most learned Jewish author of his time. Graetz (*Gesch.*, VII, 216), by no means disposed to overestimate his merits, as is evident by his curt dismissal of him with scarce a page, describes Palquera as "a living encyclopædia of the sciences of his day, trustworthy on any topic on which information may be required".

Palquera was moreover blessed with facility of expression. He was eager to impart his encyclopædic knowledge. A command of a clear style and forceful exposition made the results of his study widely accessible in Jewry. In a democratic spirit, he sought to make his knowledge popular, and rejected Arabic, the literary language of his day, for Hebrew—the tongue better understood by the masses.³⁴

Seventeen works,³⁵ some of small, others of larger size, attest to his prolific literary career. Three of these have

³⁴ (המעלות) והיתה הכונה לחברו בלח"ק כדי שתהיה תועלתו כוללת יותר, 11; the same in *מורה המורה*, 8). In *ראשית חכמה*, 21, he also says: כונתי לחבר מאלו החכמות בלשוננו כי טוב הוא שנלמוד אותם בלשוננו משנלמוד בלשון אחר; comp. Steinschneider, *Hebr. Übers.*, 5.

³⁵ I include in this number also the fragments of a Hebrew work, which contained extracts from Pseudo-Empedocles' "Five Substances", under the

script,³⁷ nine have been printed. It would be impossible to enter here upon a lengthy discussion of the character and content of Palquera's writings. Suffice it is to say that his chief concern was with philosophy. Three works in this field were devoted to a compendium of the science and metaphysics known in his day.³⁸ Here the physics and metaphysics of Plato and Aristotle, as expounded by Aristotle's

(see below, note 53) the word חולין means *sick* (= חולים), and the whole passage has reference to the work mentioned below, note 37, No. 1. Dukes, *Zur Kenntniss der Neuhebr. Religiösen Poesie*, Frankf. a. M. 1842, p. 142, on the other hand, takes חולין הלכות as a separate work containing a versification of the talmudic tractate Hullin. Moses Ibn Habib of Lisbon (15th century) reports to have seen it, but forgot the name of the author. Steinschneider, *Jewish Literature*, 170, follows Dukes; comp., however, his *Bodl. Cat.*, col. 2538: "attamen de hoc dubitari protest." Indeed, it is more probable that the whole passage refers to his "Dietetics" (note 37), the real title of which he amplified for the sake of the rhyme. M. David, *Introd. to ראשית הכמה*, VII, not realizing this, takes חולין הלכות as part of the real title and proposes an emendation in P.'s text of a very doubtful value.

³⁷ (1) אגרת (בתי) הנהגת הגוף והנפש "Treatise (Verses) on the Proper Conduct of Body and Soul", in several manuscripts; comp. Benjacob, *s. v.*, and Steinschneider, *Cat. Bodl.*, col. 2538. (2) אגרת המוסר "Treatise on Ethics" (see מבקש, *l. c.*), the introductory part of which was published by Steinschneider in *Letterbode*, 1879, p. 79f.; comp. also *idem* in *Letterbode*, XII, 67, n. 36; *Hebr. Übers.*, 5, n. 31. (3) שלמות המעשים, likewise on ethics; see Munk, *Mélanges* etc., 495, overlooked by David, *l. c.* (4) אגרת החלום, "Treatise of the Dream". This title has misled the bibliographers (even Steinschneider, *Jewish Literature*, 371, n. 78) to believe that the book contains an exposition on the nature of dreams. Its content, however, is again ethics, and the title is due to a dream of the author, which led him to the composition of the work, as will be shown in connection with its publication, which is being prepared by the writer for a subsequent number of this REVIEW. (5) דעות הפילוסופים, a voluminous work, for the detailed characterization of which see Steinschneider, *Hebr. Übers.*, § 2.

³⁸ (1) ראשית הכמה, recently published with a German introduction of little value by M. David, Berlin 1902. The edition is rather uncritical, the editor, in most cases, having placed into the text the least correct readings. The work has been translated into Latin by an anonymous author (MS. Paris, 6691); comp. Munk, *Mélanges*, 495. Pages 72-78 in David's edition, con-

foremost commentator, Averroes, were presented anew in a systematic, yet popular, garb. Palquera, as already noted, was at one with Maimonides and the other mediæval Jewish philosophers in their devotion to the dominant Aristotelian system. As evidence of the breadth of his interests, Palquera has left us also a compendium on mediæval psychology,³⁹ and a work entitled "Diætetic of Body and Soul".⁴⁰ To these is to be added the above-mentioned defense of philosophy against its opponents,⁴¹ and "The Book of Degrees", a systematic exposition of ethics in which he deals with the various degrees of human perfection according to men's moral and intellectual qualities. It ranks, after the works of Gabirol and Bahya, among the early attempts at a systematic presentation of ethics.⁴²

taining a brief presentation of the philosophy of Plato, were published with a literal German translation and a minute description of the whole work by Steinschneider, *Al-Farabi*, 176 ff., 224 ff. (unknown to David); comp. also *Hebr. Übers.*, § 12. (2) **מבקש**, Hague 1779, Aleppo 1867, Joseffoff 1881; comp. Steinschneider, *Hebr. Übers.*, l. c. Michael Sachs, *Die religiöse Poesie der Juden in Spanien*, Berlin 1845, pp. 345-6, gave a masterly German imitation in rhymed prose of a portion of this work, pp. 24b, 25a. (3) **דעות הפילוסופים**, see above, note 37, No. 5.

³⁹ **ספר הנפש**, Lemberg 1835, and, with a very extensive commentary by Israel Hayyim Klein, Warsaw 1864; comp. the references given by David, p. ix, n. 16.

⁴⁰ See above, note 37, No. 1.

⁴¹ See above, note 28. This work, too, was translated into Latin by an anonymous author; comp. Munk, *Mélanges*, 495, No. 4, end; see above, note 38.

⁴² See above, note 3, end. Part of this work was translated into Latin by Buxtorf (fil.); see Steinschneider, "Christliche Hebraisten" in *ZfhB.*, I-V, No. 125; comp. also Dukes, *Zur rabb. Spruchkunde*, 75ff. The publication of the **ספר המעלות** had been undertaken by Zunz in 1818, who intended also to translate it into Latin (see his *Ges. Schr.*, I, 29), but only the beginning was published in the periodical **הלבנון**, IV, 6, 19. To the class of ethical works belongs also his **צרי היגון** (quoted in **מבקש**, 2b), written in rhymed prose, interspersed with metrical verses. It was first published by Saul b. Simon (Cremona 1557), who in his Introduction asserts that

Two other of Palquera's works merit special attention. The first of these is his "Fountain of Life"⁴³. Through this work Palquera saved to Judaism the credit for its most original contribution to philosophy. The most striking philosophical system, which mediæval Judaism produced, was attributed throughout the Middle Ages and up to recent times to an unknown Avicebron, or Albenzubrun. Christians and Arabs alike claimed him as their own. In 1846, the great Jewish orientalist, Solomon Munk, startled the scholarly world by the announcement that the mysterious Avicebron was no other than the famous Jewish poet Solomon Ibn Gabirol. This discovery was due ultimately to Palquera. Gabirol's system was felt to be out of touch with Judaism. It had aroused the antagonism of no less notable a thinker than Abraham Ibn Daud, whose hostility served to suppress Gabirol's book. Palquera, however, had recognized the merit of Gabirol's philosophy and sought to win for it wider recognition. He accordingly translated it from Arabic into Hebrew, and epitomized it under the title "Fountain of Life". It was left for Munk to show the identity of this work with the famous mediæval *Fons Vitæ*, attributed to Avicebron.

The second of these notable works of Palquera

he lost the original manuscript and had to reproduce its contents from memory. He, moreover, claims to have added about two thirds to the content of the book; comp. *Her. Bibl.*, IX, 49. The original manuscript is extant, however, in the collection of the late David Kaufmann, see Max Weisz, *Katalog der hebr. Handschr. und Bücher in der Bibl. des Prof. D. Kaufmann*, Frankf. a. M. 1906, p. 171. M. David, p. vii, counts this work among those lost. D. Ottensosser published the צרי חיון with a German translation, Fürth 1854.

⁴³ לקוטים מן ספר מקור חיים, edited by Munk with a French translation and notes in his famous work *Mélanges* etc., Paris 1859.

is his commentary⁴⁴ on Maimonides' "Guide of the Perplexed". This reveals Palquera's wide and deep erudition. To elucidate the Maimonidean text, he cites numerous parallel passages from the kindred Arabic literature of which he was master. Later authors often drew upon his commentary and won repute for scholarship at the expense of Palquera. In an appendix to this commentary he gives an excellent criticism of Ibn Tibbon's translation, comparing it with the original, and pointing out its defects. Franz Delitzsch valued this chapter so highly that he published an annotated translation of it in German.⁴⁵ Munk, in his French edition of Maimonides' *Guide*, makes frequent use of Palquera's commentary.

In an age absorbed in religious discussion and biblical study, it is to be expected that Palquera should have written on biblical exegesis. Unfortunately, however, his work in this field has been lost.⁴⁶ The presumable cause for this fate of his Bible commentary is not without interest. We have had occasion to note the rationalistic tendency in Bible exposition, manifest in Palquera's extant works, and his defense of philosophy against the attacks hurled at it in his day. There is ground for suspecting that this commentary was suppressed. Abrabanel's denunciation of the author as a member of the "damnable sect" of misinterpreters of the Bible⁴⁷ served to deter pious readers from

⁴⁴ Under the title *מורה המורה*, Pressburg 1837.

⁴⁵ *Literaturblatt des Orients*, 1840, p. 177 ff.; comp. Steinschneider, *Hebr Übers.*, 423.

⁴⁶ See above, note 36, No. 1.

⁴⁷ Comp. Steinschneider, *Magazin für die Wissensch. des Judent.*, XVI, 153. Our assumption regarding the causes that brought about the loss of Palquera's exegetical works finds strong support in the fact that Abrabanel's denunciation of the exegetical writings of Joseph Kaspi, whom, in the same passage of his *מפעלות אלהים*, he counts together with Palquera

this work, and thus to consign his commentary to oblivion. His radical and rationalistic interpretation of haggadic passages in the Talmud probably accounts for a similar fate which befell another of his works on talmudic Haggadah.⁴⁸

Palquera embraced in the wide sweep of his activity a branch of learning little appreciated by the Jews of his time, namely, history. He wrote a chronicle of events of his own century, and probably also of earlier centuries.⁴⁹ Considering the paucity of historic documents, such a work would be invaluable to the modern historian. Contemporary indifference, however, allowed this chronicle to be lost.

A sketch of Palquera would not be complete without at least a passing reference to his work as a poet. From early youth, Palquera was devoted to the muse, and in his later life, he struggled almost pathetically against his poetic inclinations. He confesses to the youthful folly of having composed, in his early years, more than 20,000 lines of verse, only about a half of which he wrote down.⁵⁰ In all

among the misinterpreters of the Bible, has led to the suppression of Kaspi's works in the centuries that followed; comp. Steinschneider in *Ersch und Gruber's Enc.*, sect. 2, vol. 31, p. 73; comp. the instance of Ibn Gabirol and Ibn Daud mentioned above, p. 174.

⁴⁸ See above, note 36, No. 2.

⁴⁹ See above, note 36, No. 3.

⁵⁰ ובתי השיר למעלה מרבאיתם רבו וכרבוא מהם נכתבו כי רובם אברו שהיו להכתב ראויים. In this work, written for the most part in rhymed verse, when nearly forty years of age (see *ib.*, beginning), he bids a touching farewell to his muse. He regrets the hours wasted in his youth in writing verse, hours which he might have spent more profitably in the pursuit of knowledge and search for truth. He vows solemnly to live henceforth for science alone.

אמרתי אל נפשי לגרש השירה ולשלח ולהיות דינה כדון שעיר המשתלח ולשוב כלב מהור לאר נושא עין וחמא סולח ואדור נדר לכל אעמוד עוד בסודה וכתבתי לה זה ספר כריתות ואתן בידה:

his extant works, we find various poems and epigrams, some of which we have had occasion to quote earlier in this essay.⁵¹

Akin to his poetical skill is his facility for rhymed prose, a literary device borrowed from the Arabs and much in vogue among Jewish writers of the thirteenth and fourteenth century. His clever conceits and witty puns easily rank among the best of their kind.

Whatever we may think of Palquera's poetic talents, we cannot deny him literary skill of a high order. With earnestness, there is associated in Palquera a power of expression, adequate to the author's thought and feeling, capable of clarifying the most abstruse ideas of mediæval phi-

בנות השיר מעלי פני אשלח
ואגרתִי תהי ספר בריתות
ובת חכמה אארש לי לאשה
ואקנה בת תבונה לי צמיתות.

(The word *אגרתִי* refers to the *מבקש*, which he divides into two distinct parts (*אגרות*), the first of which is written in rhyme, the second in plain prose.)

His last poem (on p. 28*b*) he introduces with the following words: *ואלֵה דברי שיר האחרונים ומתיס זהו והלאה אין לי חלק בשירות ולא נחלה בזמירות*; comp. M. Sachs, *l. c.*, 346. To consider the occupation with poetry a sinful waste of time is not a rare occurrence among mediæval poets, and their assertions are not to be taken seriously (see David, vi, n. 5). Judah Halevi is reported to have repented before his death, as did also Plato, his former devotion to the art of poetry; comp. Cassel on *Kusari*, II, 73. The same is said of Moses Rieti, the so-called Hebrew Dante; see Steinschneider, *Letteratura Italiana dei Giudei*, Rome 1884, p. 49.

⁵¹ The following four epigrams (*מבקש*, 2*b*, 17*b*, 26*b*) in the translation of Rabbi Ettelson may be added here:

1.

Adapt thyself to time and circumstance,
So wilt thou be untroubled every way;
Amongst the wise make wise thy countenance,
And with the fool, the rôle of dullard play;
Roar, if upon a lion thou shouldst chance,
But if an ass thou meetest, simply bray:

losophy. There is a peculiar charm and a strong personal appeal in nearly everything that Palquera wrote.⁵² His works breathe sincerity and enthusiasm. The reader feels that with Palquera, authorship is not diletanteism; it is a sacred life's mission dedicated to the service of truth and knowledge.

In conclusion, a word on Palquera's influence on his contemporaries and on later generations. A final verdict is not safe at the present stage of historical and bibliographical research. However, if we bear in mind how many works of notable authors of the thirteenth century have

2.

Seek wisdom, understand the times and seasons;
Acquire judgment to weigh well all reasons;
Pursue this quest, tho' you be old and tho'
Your path's beset with hosts of cares and treasours.

3.

If sin thou wouldst avoid, then speak but once,
For the Creator gave thee just *one mouth*,
And listen twice,—thus speech with silence, season!
But gave thee *two ears* for that very reason!

4.

Reproof will not amend the brazen,—no,
Not even if thou pleadest, day and night.
Ply not with rod the fool's back, for not so
Canst thou his nature's warping set aright.
The rather pound him on the head, for there
His "imp of the perverse" hath fitting lair.

The third epigram is the rhymed adaptation of a sentence in מוסרי וראה אפלאטון איש הפילוסופים, II, 2, No. 17, where it is ascribed to Plato: מרבה לדבר וממעט לשמוע ויאמר לו פרע חוב אונדך מפיד כי הבורא ית' יצר לנו שתי אונים ולשון אחת כרי שנשמע כפל מה שנדבר; comp. Kaufmann, *Die Sinne*, 138. Steinschneider, *Manna*, 84, translated this epigram, among others of Palquera, metrically into German.

⁵² Güdemann, *Das jüd. Unterrichtswesen*, 157, strange to say, designates Palquera's style as "dry" and monotonous! Comp. to the contrary Kaufmann, *Studien über Salomon Ibn Gabirol*, 59, 61.

been lost, the preservation of so many of Palquera's writings is evidence of the high regard in which he was held by his own and by succeeding generations. That some of these works should be preserved in eight or even ten manuscripts, is proof of no slight popularity. Citations from Palquera's works are frequent, although credit is not often given to the author.⁵³ Mediæval scholastics thought his works on

⁵³ "The abundance of quotations (from Arabic sources in Palquera's Commentary on the *Guide* of Maimonides) was sufficient to give to those who plagiarized him the appearance of great learning" (Steinschneider, *Hebr. Übers.*, 422). Some of those who made use of Palquera's works may be mentioned here in chronological order:

MOSES DE LEON (13th century); see Steinschneider, *Hebr. Übers.*, 243, n. 975.

ISAAC IBN LATIF (1280); see Steinschneider, *Hebr. Übers.*, p. 23, n. 150.

JOSEPH KASPI, who lived not long after Palquera, based his commentaries on the *Guide* of Maimonides (edited by Raphael Kirchheim, Frankf. a. M. 1848) on Palquera's commentary on the same work, and copied whole chapters from it, often mentioning also his source; see about the relation of Kaspi's works to those of Palquera Kirchheim's Introduction to the work mentioned, and Steinschneider's article, *Joseph Caspi*," in *Ersch und Gruber's Enc.*, sect. 2, vol. 31, p. 67.

ELHANAN BEN ABRAHAM (14th century); see Kaufmann, *Studien über Salomon Ibn Gabirol*, 13.

GERSHON BEN SOLOMON (14th century), in his encyclopædic work *שער השמים*, third edition by Heidenheim, Rödelheim 1801; comp. Steinschneider, *Hebr. Übers.*, 9.

JUDAH LEON MOSCONI (14th century), suggested by Steinschneider, *Magazin f. d. W. d. Jud.* III, 193.

SAMUEL ZARZA (1370), in his super-commentary on Abraham Ibn Ezra; see M. Straschun in *פרחי צפון*, edited by S. J. Fünß, Wilna 1841, I, 48, n. 11. In his unpublished *יוסי מכלל* Zarza quotes Palquera directly; see Steinschneider, *Hebr. Bibl.*, IX, 49.

SOLOMON BEN MENAHEM, called PRAT MAIMON (1420), in his commentary on the *Kusari*; see Ventianer, *l. c.*, XV, n. 4.

JOSEPH BEN SHEM-TOB (1455); see Steinschneider, in *Ersch und Gruber's Enc.*, sect. 2, vol. 31, p. 88, n. 4.

MOSES MINZ (15th century); see M. Straschun, *l. c.*

JOHANAN ALEMANNO (*ob.* 1500); see above, note 35; Steinschneider, *Hebr. Übers.*, p. 5, n. 36.

philosophy worthy of translation into Latin,⁵⁴ and later Hebrew scholars have deemed them deserving of commentaries.⁵⁵ Since the age of the printing press, some of his works have passed through several editions.⁵⁶ Even for modern students, Palquera has not been devoid of interest; witness several scholarly editions of some of his works. Thus Palquera has received some of the recognition merited by his sincere and life-long devotion to the pursuit of truth.

* * *

More than six hundred years have passed away since the days of Shem Tob Palquera, a scholar of the highest type, an enthusiastic champion of learning and enlightenment. His life and activity are the embodiment of the philosophic romanticism of the Jews in the Middle Ages. In him we see a man of the most exalted sentiments, whose striving after moral and spiritual perfection, and courageous and self-sacrificing devotion to the fostering of intellectual life among his brethren, served to break through the barriers which the dark age of ecclesiastical bigotry sought

ISAAC ABRABANEL (*ob.* 1508) quotes him frequently; see above, note 47; Steinschneider, *Hebr. Übers.*, p. 7, n. 47.

ABRAHAM BEN DAVID PROVENÇALI, who, in 1555, copied in Modena Palquera's *מורה המורה*, and, in 1593, in Venice, the latter's Introduction to *ראשית חכמה*: see Zunz, in *Kerem Chemed*, V, 157.

SAUL BEN SIMON (1557), who edited the *צרי היגון*; see above note 42.

SOLOMON FINZI (1600); see Zunz, *Hebr. Bibl.*, IX, 137.

JOSEPH SOLOMON DEL MEDIGO (*ob.* 1655); see Strascun, *l. c.*

ELHANAN HAEHNDEL KIRCHHAHN (1707), in his *שמות הנפש* (see Grünbaum, *Jüdisch-deutsche Chrestomathie*, 238 ff), Rödelsheim 1752, pp. 9, 12; see Steinschneider, *Hebr. Bibl.*, IX, 49, n. 7.

⁵⁴ See above, notes 38, 41, 42.

⁵⁵ See above, note 39.

⁵⁶ So the *מבקש* (3 edd.), *צרי היגון* (4 edd.), *אגרת הוכוח* (3 edd.), *ספר הנפש* (2 edd.).

to impose on Jewry. The problems which occupied Palquera are no longer our problems, and the solutions advanced by him cannot meet present requirements. The spirit, however, which animated his career, is the spirit that animates us to-day: the spirit searching for the permanent amid the transitory, for progress and light. With a feeling of appreciation and reverence toward Palquera, we may say with the poet:

“Wer den Besten seiner Zeit genug gethan, der hat gelebt für alle Zeiten.”